

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Tuesday, June 8, 2010

Brain Drain Race, Family Fun Highlight Summer Evening Fest

This year's Summer Evening Fest and the 11th annual Brain Drain Night Time Race are set for on June 18 at the Wyoming Life Resource Center (WLRC) in Lander.

The Summer Evening Fest begins at 6 p.m. and features live music, an ice cream social and a fireworks show. The 7 p.m. race begins and ends on the WLRC grounds. Summer Evening Fest activities are included in the \$25 race entry fee.

The WLRC Visions Program is hosting the race to help promote public awareness of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and its consequences. This event specifically benefits the Wyoming Certified Brain Injury Specialist Program, which provides certification, education and support to Wyoming residents living with an acquired brain injury as well as their friends, families and caregivers.

A TBI is a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the brain's function. A TBI can result in short- or long-term problems with independent function.

Mike Aurand, WLRC Visions Program coordinator, said Wyoming's rate of brain injury and death due to TBI leads the nation. The incidence rate of brain injury nationally is greater than that of HIV/AIDS, developmental disability, breast cancer, spinal cord injury and multiple sclerosis.

Aurand said TBI can cause a wide range of functional changes affecting thinking, language, learning, emotions, behavior and/or sensation. "It can also cause epilepsy and increase the risk for conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other brain disorders that become more prevalent with age," he said.

Leading TBI causes include falls, motor vehicle-traffic crashes, struck by/against objects and assaults. Blasts are a leading cause of TBI for active duty military personnel in war zones. Males are about 1.5 times more likely as females to sustain a TBI. The two age groups at highest risk for TBI are 0 to 4 year olds and 15 to 19 year olds.

The Wyoming Life Resource Center is one of five state healthcare facilities operated by the Wyoming Department of Health.

For more information on the Visions Program and the 2010 Brain Drain Night Time Race or to request an entry form contact Aurand at 307-335-6849 or mike.aurand@health.wyo.gov.

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